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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

Statement submitted by the American Association of Jurists, the International Federation of Human Rights and the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category II

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

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Unsatisfied needs of the Centre for Human Rights in terms of financial, human and infrastructural resources

In resolution 1990/47 of 25 May 1990 the Economic and Social Council took note that the workload of the Centre for Human Rights had increased while its resources had failed to keep pace, and the Council requested solutions of the Secretary-General.

In resolution 45/180 of 21 December 1990 the General Assembly made the same observation and requested the Secretary-General to act promptly.

The measures adopted thus far are along the right lines but do not go nearly far enough to solve the acute problems which the Centre now faces in fulfilling all its mandates and generally carrying out its activities.

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* E/1991/30.

The non-governmental organizations submitting this statement consider that a really substantial increase in the financial and human resources of the Centre for Human Rights is essential.

As to the computerization project, it should be pointed out that not only must the work of the human rights treaty monitoring bodies in relation to reporting be computerized (see Economic and Social Council decision 1990/226) but also a database must be established to facilitate work in relation to all the Centre's mandates at their various stages, from the gathering of information to the follow-up of cases and situations, in addition to what is suggested in paragraph 46 of the Secretary-General's report in document E/CN.4/1990/39.

The Centre must have a database of the kind found in certain services of other bodies of the United Nations system, such as the International Labour Office (ILO).

Advisory services and technical assistance

The growing recourse to these services is extremely heartening. But we believe that their scope must be better defined, the preparation and implementation of programmes must continue to be improved and the administration of the services must be further refined.

In the first place we consider that the programmes of the advisory services must be drawn up and applied with the participation of the non-governmental organizations, which to some extent represent the potential and real victims of human rights violations. The non-governmental organizations must also take an active part in the process as a whole, from the preparation of the programmes of the advisory services to their application in practice.

The national non-governmental organizations are familiar with their respective countries' requirements in relation to advisory services and so are able to make valuable suggestions when the programmes are drawn up. When the services are delivered, the non-governmental organizations can express an opinion as to which regulatory requirements are most urgent and can make suggestions in that regard. They are most definitely entitled to benefit from courses given by specialists and experts.

Secondly, we consider that it is time to pass to the next stage in the administration of the advisory services and, following the example of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, to establish a Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights.

The proposed Board of Trustees not only would take care of the administration of funds but also, given the large number of requests for

advice and assistance, would consider carefully each situation and project with a view to determining priorities according to the urgency and foreseeable effectiveness of each project.

Lastly, a way of enabling the non-governmental organizations to be represented on the proposed Board of Trustees should be considered.